

The Rutgers Seminar for Library Administrators

THE RUTGERS ADVANCED SEMINAR for Library Administrators was a bold experiment in library education. Germinal, its offshoots and continuations will have increasingly valuable bearing upon the practice of librarianship. Original, it labored under all the difficulties that attend a pioneer effort. Disadvantages and difficulties, ever present and real, were considerably outweighed by solid benefits that accrued to the participants and, even more, because of their recognition, they can be either avoided or overcome in the future. The Seminar-ians and staff worked so hard and so doggedly during the long six weeks that perhaps they did not realize all they had accomplished.

The announcement of the Seminar stated: "Essentially, this is an opportunity for librarians who have administrative responsibilities to step aside from their jobs for six weeks to look at them from the outside, to study and plan under top-level direction, and to sharpen and test their thinking in a highly selected group." The hope was expressed that out of the Seminar would come additional leadership for the profession, and it was decided to limit membership to thirty persons selected by the Seminar staff from among the applicants.

It was here that the first difficulty arose: There were not sufficient applicants of high calibre to enable the Seminar staff to work with a group of thirty.

A preliminary list of registrants contained twenty-seven names, but later withdrawals reduced the list to twenty. The reasons for the small enrollment were several. The period of the Seminar was neither here nor there; it was neither an academic term, nor was it the usual length of a professional assembly. In the future, it would be well to present either a series of week-long seminars, each developing from the preceding one, yet each existing *sui generis*, or to present a full academic semester devoted to the Seminar. These suggestions are not alternatives. There is need for them both.

When the Seminar assembled for sessions at the Graduate School of Library Service, Rutgers, April 9-May 18, 1956, the registrants were: Jean P. Black, librarian, Portland State College; Earl C. Borgeson, librarian, Harvard Law School; Mark Crum, librarian, Kanawha County Library, Charleston, W. Va.; Theodore Epstein, librarian, Rider College; Lorena A. Garlock, librarian, University of Pittsburgh; Theodore C. Hines, chief, extension division, Public Library of the District of Columbia; Bernard Kreissman, assistant director for humanities, University of Nebraska; William R. Lansberg, director of acquisitions and preparations, Dartmouth College Library; Viola Maihl, director, Linden Public Library, Linden, N.J.; Alfred Rawlinson, librarian, University of South Carolina; William B. Ready, assistant director for acquisition, Stanford University Libraries; Donald O. Rod,

Mr. Ready is director of the Marquette University Library.

head librarian and head, Department of Library Science, Iowa State Teachers College; Roscoe Rouse, librarian, Baylor University; Richard H. Shoemaker, librarian, Newark Colleges, Rutgers University; Eleanor S. Stephens, librarian, Oregon State Library; Robert L. Talmadge, associate director, University of Kansas Libraries; Helene S. Taylor, director, Free Public Library, Bloomfield, N.J.; S. Lyman Tyler, director of libraries, Brigham Young University; Arthur J. Vennix, assistant director of libraries for social studies and administration, University of Nebraska; David C. Weber, assistant to the librarian, Harvard University; Herbert Zafren, Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati.

Keyes Metcalf, director; Dean Lowell Martin, Professor Ralph Shaw, and David Weber, executive assistant, comprised the resident staff of the Seminar. This resident staff was greatly augmented by visitors. They included Verner Clapp, John B. Kaiser, R. C. Swank, Roger McDonough, Andrew Osborn, Francis St. John, Ralph Ulveling, and, a constant visitor who became increasingly understanding and welcome, Maurice Tauber.

In addition to the resident staff and to visitors, a third means of instruction was by field trips to the university libraries at Princeton, Columbia, and the University of Pennsylvania, and to the Philadelphia Free Library, the New York Public Library, and the Brooklyn Public Library. Many other trips were made by groups of the Seminar.

The thorough manner of subject presentation at the Seminar can be illustrated by an example: "Administrative decisions that should be made before building of collections begins." Under this topic the following items were designated for discussion:

"How do you determine subject fields to be covered?" "What should be the policy in regard to gifts of books?" "What can be done about weeding and

discarding books no longer in demand?" "When a volume wears out or disintegrates because of poor paper, what should be done?" "Policies in regard to the acquisition of non-printed and non-monographic materials, such as maps, manuscripts, sheet music, newspapers, serials of all kinds, public documents, phonograph records, and microreproductions." "Should the emphasis be on new or old material?" "How much attention should be paid to the language in which the books are printed?" "What should be done about 'bloc' purchases?" "When is duplication necessary, permissible?" "Is a fairly definite policy for the collection of rarities desirable, and, if so, what should it be?" "What is the place of interlibrary cooperation in building collections?"

In order to provide a common background knowledge in all the Seminars, preliminary reading was assigned.

This reading consisted of appropriate chapters and articles in a variety of publications: "A Pessimist Looks at the Public Library" and "The University Library" in Wilhelm Munthe's *American Librarianship From a European Angle* (ALA, 1939); "The Problem of the College Library" in B. Harvie Branscomb's *Teaching With Books* (ALA, 1940); "Inquiry Assumptions, the Library Faith, and Library Objectives" in Robert D. Leigh's *The Public Library in the United States* (Columbia, 1950); "Financial Problems of University Libraries" by Keyes D. Metcalf, in *Harvard Library Bulletin*, VIII (1954); "The Growth of American Research Libraries" in Fremont Rider's *The Scholar and the Future of the Research Library* (Hadham, 1954); "The Library in the University" and "Problems of Policy and Administration" in *Planning the University Library Building* (Princeton, 1949), edited by John E. Burchard and others; "The Development of Library Resources at Harvard: Problems and Potentialities" by Andrew D. Osborn in *Report on the*

Harvard University Library (Harvard, 1955) by Keyes D. Metcalf; "The Crisis in Cataloging" by Andrew D. Osborn in *Library Quarterly*, XI (1941); "Patriotism Is Not Enough" in Elton Mayo's *The Social Problems of an Industrial Civilization* (Harvard, 1945); and "Decision Making," "Administrative Organization," and "Some Problems of Administrative Theory" in Herbert A. Simon's *Administrative Behavior* (Macmillan, 1947).

During the six weeks, all the necessary library literature was readily available. For other reading, the crowded university library was open, and the cacaphony from the new building arising across the way from the classroom brought home clamorously an object lesson in library planning. Donald Cameron and his staff were always on hand to answer questions about the new building.

The educational means, then, were profuse, practical, and imaginative. There was a tendency, which became more evident as the weeks went by, to feel that only those participants concerned with administration of learned libraries were getting the full advantage of the Seminar. There is a difference between popular and learned libraries, a difference of such an extent that one Seminar, one professional body, cannot really handle them both. This fault again stems from the pioneer nature of the Seminar and can be remedied.

Acquisition, processing, public service, cooperation, building, staff, money, administrative organization, long-term planning were among topics exhaustively examined and discussed, all from the standpoint of a library administrator. The Seminar broke up into several groups of like people whenever possible, and carried the discussions deeper and further within their own interests. Each Seminarian prepared a paper based on his own needs and experience and was assigned a staff counsellor. The Semi-

narians were expected to be ready at all times to participate in classroom work.

It is in the workload of the Seminar-ians that the Seminar is most in need of revision; it was far too heavy. Granting that the people involved did not make up as homogeneous a group as had been anticipated, there was still too much expected from the student. It is difficult for an academic staff to realize that administrators have been away from school for so long, that they think differently from students, that a new approach is needed to enthrall them in a Seminar. The long hours of the Seminar, generally more than six classroom hours a day, and several week-end assignments, left little time for the reflection and preparation required for mature participation. This, I think, is a difficulty that needs to be overcome. The director of any future Seminar must learn from the experience of Keyes Metcalf.

Another feature of the Seminar to be avoided in the future is too much propinquity. It is all very well for a group who are together but for a week or so to meet constantly at all meals, to talk shop on all occasions. But when the meeting lasts for six weeks, a genuine malaise sets in.

It can be seen, then, that the noisy, crowded classroom, the lodging, the timing, and the enrollment are minor difficulties that will more or less resolve themselves after more time and study. The more serious difficulty, that of developing a teaching method that will enthrall administrators, remains to be solved. A Seminar benefits in proportion as it reflects the needs and aspirations of its members; the Rutgers Seminar followed this shining and clouded pattern. It is a beginning of a new form of library education that will change greatly as it develops; it will recognize differences, enunciate principles. The library profession has been served well before by the Rutgers Library School, but never so well as by this beginning.